

Report of:	Kalvinder Kohli , Head of Service – Prevention and Complex, Commissioning Centre of Excellence, People Directorate
To:	Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	19th January 2016
Title	Adults with Learning Disabilities – Housing and Employment Support

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To provide information to Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members on the current position relating to support to adults with learning disabilities, with particular reference to housing and employment.

2.0 Housing

For some time, the direction of local and national policy for people with learning disabilities has been to enable individuals to live as independently as possible rather than in institutional care.

With advances in health care, people with a learning disability are living longer and want to access the full range of housing options, the same as any other older person. Some may be looking to stay in their own home with the help of adaptations, support and assistive technology. Some may want to access extra care housing, and others may be taking the opportunity to have more independence in where they live.

There is a range of support and housing provisions within Birmingham which offer people with learning disabilities the opportunity to live more independently within their communities.

3.0 Housing Support (Supporting People Programme)

The aim of housing support services is to enable vulnerable people to live independently within their communities. The preventative role of housing support is therefore described within this context:

1. Support to transition from residential or institutional care settings into more independent forms of living across a range of tenure.
2. Support to live independently by preventing the escalation of need into statutory responses.
3. Support to live meaningful and fulfilling lives which includes access to wellbeing and leisure services and also to employment, training and volunteering activities.

The current annual spend in 2015/16 for learning disabilities housing support services is £4,096,548. A further contribution of £150K is made to the in-house enablement service to develop independent living skills for citizens either exiting residential care or receiving a reduction in their packages of care.

On average, at any one time the existing arrangements support 756 citizens including 213 units of supported accommodation and support to people to live independently within the community. The current contracts are due to expire in March 2016.

The nature of the housing support is dependent on the needs of the individual and may include the following tenancy ready support:

1. Support to access social housing including assistance with bidding and tenancy sign-up.
2. Understanding on how to respond to communications (benefits, utilities, junk mail, landlord and tenant matters).
3. Budgeting and financial management support including support to set up payment plans.
4. Benefit entitlement and maximisation of income including support to complete benefit forms.
5. Health and safety within and outside of the home.
6. Support to maintain the home, including guidance and teaching relating to domestic skills including cleaning, operating electrical items safely.
7. Dealing with emergencies and unexpected events.
8. Health and wellbeing including healthy eating, engagement in health services, leisure services and social interaction.
9. Support to access employment, training and volunteering.
10. Staying safe, include recognising and reporting abuse.

The challenge facing the local authority is to seek solutions which deliver the right outcomes for people with learning disabilities at a lesser cost to the public purse. The allocated budget for 2016/17 will be £3,524,500.

An integrated commissioning approach has been adopted across the aligned prevention budget streams within the Commissioning Centre of Excellence for the People Directorate. This has enabled a pathway model to be co-designed with citizens, commissioners, service providers and relevant stakeholders for the disabilities client groups. The aim of the model is very much focused on resilience building for people with learning disabilities to be supported to do more for themselves and to move through, and exit the right services at the right time. The pathway requires service providers to work together to ensure the best use of resources available. The model places a particular emphasis on the better use of resources available within the universal space, in order to help to prevent crisis or higher cost interventions. At the same time the model would avoid overlap and duplication between organisations or commissioned services.

The pathway is outlined in **Appendix 1**; for some citizens the journey may be linear, for others they may access and exit at differing points. The intention is also not to create unnecessary demand or dependency on services.

In terms of housing support services, greater flexibility has been designed into the way that services can be delivered on the front-line where appropriate. Examples include use of group rather than one-to-one support for common activities such as budgeting and healthy eating. This means a lesser impact in terms of reductions in both services and a potential

slight increase in the numbers of citizens assisted to live independently within their own tenancies.

In real terms therefore, the new commissioning will provide 200 units of supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities, 13 less than the current arrangements; however, an overall increase in the total numbers of people, circa 860 – 1,100 supported to live independently within the community across a range of tenures.

Applications to social housing

In terms of housing allocations a provision is made within the new Allocation Scheme (due to be implemented later this year) for those ready to move on from Council Accredited Supported Accommodation Schemes Applicants, but who still need to be supported to live independently, to be awarded a Band 2 priority.

Applicants must be assessed as:

- in need of long term rather than short term on-going tenancy support
- ready to move to independent accommodation
- having a support package (if required) that has been assessed and is in place
- having a vulnerability whereby accommodation in the private rented sector would, through its short term nature, have a detrimental effect on their vulnerability.

There has also been a channel shift towards self - service for applications. In order to apply applicants must complete an on-line application form. The on-line form is intuitive and will feature helpful hints and FAQs. It is however recognised that some applicants particularly those with disabilities/vulnerabilities will require support in completing the application process, providing the necessary supporting documentation and navigating through the bidding process. This support can be requested by telephone, or through prior arrangements at designated offices.

The scheme has always identified the need for ongoing case management to support those in the most need to manage their application and to make appropriate bids for accommodation through the Choice-based letting system. The operational design for this is still being developed but will ensure that the most vulnerable are able to access support.

4. Birmingham City Council tenancy support

New Tenancy support

New tenancy data March 2014–2015 shows that of the 1297 tenancies let, 94 new tenants have indicated to the local authority that they have a learning disability. Clearly this data is not as accurate as we would like, given that there is no obligation to disclose this information.

Access to the service

The housing computer records system has person alerts set which enable staff and repair contractors, to respond appropriately to individual customer needs and requirements. At the point of service delivery, staff will be alerted to provide the service in the way that has been requested by the individual. Where required, staff will also engage carers and advocates when communicating with people having a learning disability.

For instance, during home visits, our housing officers will provide assistance with completing housing benefit and other application forms and documents to those tenants who have a specific need. Officers will take time to explain our policies clearly to tenants who may not readily understand them making use of appropriate language formats.

Letting support to new tenants

All new tenants are offered a 12 week support package to help them cope with the demands of managing their home. Working through a support plan they may be assisted with for example benefit applications, debt advice, furniture grants or other assistance, which will help them to live independently within their home and community. This includes support to access services provided by organisations that deliver support to people with learning disabilities.

Supporting tenancy sustainment

The housing teams are fully engaged in multi-agency approaches to enable tenancy sustainment by convening case conferences or actively referring any tenants needing support to other specialist agencies that may assist them, including Adults Social Care.

Neighbourhood Caretakers are on hand to give advice about reporting repairs or how to use waste disposal or recycling facilities on local estates. Their knowledge of tenants within their schemes gives them an awareness of any changing needs or vulnerabilities and will alert other housing colleagues to ensure any support needs are met.

The Anti-Social Behaviour teams take a 'customer centred' approach when dealing with reports of anti-social behaviour. Officers will recognise that a person having a disability is more likely to be a victim of anti-social behaviour. When complaints are received our ASB teams will provide support to victims through an agreed action plan. Where there may be a literacy difficulty in recording evidence for example, alternative means of doing so are discussed and agreed. This may involve the victim's support worker recording the evidence or provision of Dictaphones where suitable. A 'vulnerability matrix' assessment tool has been introduced to help our anti-social behaviour teams to identify key risks. The principle underlying the matrix is that even if an incident is low key and not serious, the potential vulnerability of the victim is considered, which in turn may escalate the incident for priority action.

There is an expectation that tenants comply with their conditions of tenancy. If problems arise and legal action becomes necessary then checks are in place to ensure that the Council has accounted for any specific needs and addressed them before action is taken. Every effort is made to ensure that as far as we can be aware the tenant is capable of

understanding any action to be taken. If legal action is necessary then the Council will arrange a litigation friend to act on their behalf at a court hearing.

Making the best use of stock

The Place Directorate have worked in partnership with Birmingham Mencap for the last 10 years by leasing a sheltered scheme to help people with severe learning disabilities learn how to live and integrate into the community. We are currently in the process of extending the lease again for a further period of time.

5. Adult social care alternatives to residential accommodation

In his 2013 report 'Birmingham – a review of demand management in adult social care', Professor John Bolton highlighted a disproportionately high level of spend on residential care for people with learning disabilities relative to best practice around the country. It highlighted the challenge to the local authority to put in place support for people to achieve greater levels of independence and to reduce the numbers of people in residential care.

Birmingham is committed to offering individuals the greatest opportunity to achieve greater independence and live in the least restrictive form of accommodation. Where in the past we have become overly reliant on residential care, alternative models have emerged, including Supported Living (tenancy based accommodation with a bespoke care package built around the person) and Shared Lives (adult placements within family homes) and it is this type of accommodation Birmingham has sought to develop in recent years and continues to promote in its future market shaping activity.

Shared Lives – Birmingham has set ambitious targets to increase the number of Shared Lives placements to become 'best in class' when compared with other core metropolitan councils. Shared Lives (or adult placement as it is sometimes known) is a form of support where vulnerable adults/young people live at home with a specifically recruited and trained carer and their family. The service runs in a similar way to a Foster Placement, but this service is specifically designed for adults and young people. It is a nationally recognised model of care which delivers consistently high outcomes for service users. The Shared Lives model is based on the notion that an 'individual or family' is paid a modest amount to include the individual in their family and community life. This lends itself to the service user developing a number of close contacts within their local social community.

In 2015 Person Shaped Support, an external Shared Lives provider was commissioned alongside the Council's own service to recruit additional Shared Lives carers. The contract value for the 18 month pilot is £199,684. The provider has so far delivered on its initial 6 month goal to recruit 5 new carers. During the same period the Council's own Shared Lives service has increased the number of approved carers from 60 to 70 since April 2015.

Shared Lives Enablement Fund – Work is currently underway to establish an enablement fund for new Shared Lives carers who do not have the financial means to pay for adaptations to their properties in order to ensure that their property is suitable for the citizen moving in with them. The fund is proposed to be a total of £195,000 and to consist of £150,000 capital funding and £45,000 revenue funding. The fund is to run for three years and will be £50,000 capital funding per annum and £15,000 revenue funding per annum.

The adaptations may amount to several hundred pounds (for cosmetic changes) to several thousand pounds (where structural changes are required). This fund can also help and support new Shared Lives carers who wish to move out of small rented accommodation to a larger property in order to have a citizen placed with them. The fund can be utilised to pay for security deposits on the new rented accommodation or once again for any minor adaptations. We believe Birmingham is the first authority to set up this fund and shows the progressive nature to do things differently for the benefit of the Citizens.

Supported Living – Birmingham has set similarly ambitious ‘best in class’ targets in terms of Supported Living placements. In recent years Commissioners have made significant efforts to encourage the development of ‘core and cluster’ accommodation, where groups of independent flats are clustered around a care hub. This model enables efficiencies to be made in terms of the care and support delivered, while maintaining individualised approaches and ensuring that individuals and their staff teams are not isolated. Commissioners have worked to bring in new providers to Birmingham and also to encourage existing providers to consolidate disparately located accommodation into core and cluster schemes. As a result a number of small schemes have been developed across the City.

Autumn 2016 will see the completion of a large Supported Living scheme in East Birmingham, where Upward Housing and Care are developing The Bromford. This is intended to offer accommodation for in the region of 60 people in high specification flats, and will include a ‘care hotel’ for short breaks and respite care, an outward facing community hub and employment opportunities in retail units.

In late 2016 Lifeways will also complete their development in Bartley Green. This will comprise 32 independent flats for people with learning and physical disabilities and additional 9 bed specialist provision for people with complex autistic spectrum disorder related needs.

6. The Pathway towards Employment, Training and Volunteering

The current statistics available from the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities clearly illustrate the gulf between the aspirations of people with learning disabilities who want to work and the numbers who actually obtain and sustain paid employment:

- Only 6.6% of adults with learning disabilities were reported to be in some form of paid employment. The majority of people with learning disabilities, who are in employment, work part-time.
- Men were more likely to be working 30+ hours per week than women (1.3% v 0.4%). Employment rates varied considerably across Local Authorities, ranging from 0-36%.
- It is estimated that 65% of people with learning disabilities would like a paid job.

(Source: Report - Valuing Employment Now 2010).

Current Diversity data available for 15483 Birmingham City Council Employees grades 1 to JNC level indicates that only 23 employees have identified that they have a learning disability.

Needs analysis

“Following a recent service redesign, the Council’s Employment and Skills service has had to reconfigure its capacity around direct delivery of front line employment support services and is now working much more through a partnership and commissioning model. Within this approach the previous Disability Employment Solutions team function has been downscaled and subsumed within a streamlined Employment & Skills Service. The previous Work Choice sub-contract which the Council was directly delivering to adults with disabilities and learning difficulties has time-expired and the approach adopted is now to review all of the teams commissioned activities and generic recruitment campaigns to ensure that they offer accessible routes to employment for all vulnerable groups.

To that end the Employment and Skills service is currently working with colleagues from Public Health in the context of JSNA assessments to inform the Council’s future strategy to engage with vulnerable groups. The strategic assessment will be supported by more detailed needs assessments, three of which have been prioritised for 2015/16, including the theme of employment and vulnerable people.

Work on the employment and mental health assessment has already started with the first set of findings due to be published by end of January 2016. Work on learning and physical and sensory disabilities client groups commences January 2016.

7. Preparation support

Supporting people with learning disabilities into employment is a long-term journey for all those involved. The commissioned housing support services provide the initial support to begin this journey. Furthermore, many of the commissioned organisations bring together their organisational resources, expertise and networks to provide holistic packages of support in order to achieve better outcomes relating to employment training and volunteering.

The pathway to support citizens into training and employment starts at the initial needs assessment stage as part of the life skills section of the assessment. The assessor identifies the training and education needs as well as support needs around getting into voluntary or paid work and subsequently this information is incorporated into the support planning process. Working with the customer, under the ‘Enjoy and Achieve’ and ‘Achieve Economic Wellbeing’ sections of the support plan the outcomes identified in the needs assessment are broken down into a series of achievable goals and the steps and support required to achieve these results are agreed with the citizen.

It is important to recognise that supporting a person with a learning disability to be work ready is only the first stage of a holistic approach to prepare the person to understand the principles of employment as well as developing their skills. In practice, people with learning

disabilities who need to get into training or work-like activities may not be ready due to a lack of confidence, issues with social skills and anxieties, lack of independent travel skills, or inertia brought about by having no meaningful activities throughout their adult life, amongst other things. The pathway into training and work-life activities is also supported by various internal activities, for example, social networking opportunities such as those offered by Trident Reach Reach2Friends, coffee mornings, arts and crafts, cycling club, the allotment project and Reach for the Stars which gives the citizens an opportunity to meet new people and participate in activities of interest, helping them to improve their social skills and functioning and building confidence. As citizens gain in confidence they have the opportunity to start participating in the planning, organising and facilitating of activities on a voluntary basis. As volunteers they are expected to adhere to particular codes of behaviour, communicate appropriately with peers and start to problem solve independently. These are further skills that will be applicable in work or training environments.

Most organisations also offer travel training to help citizens gain the confidence to get from place to place independently which is an identified support need for many individuals. In addition, some citizens may also be signposted for this training externally as they require more intensive training. There is also recognition that for some citizens who have not participated in any form of training for a very long time, going directly into college would prove daunting. Therefore in such cases, the citizen is encouraged to participate initially in the training programmes that are run internally by organisations. These are bite-sized sessions which cover areas such as cooking, self-care, health and safety and basic computers. Some internal courses are delivered in partnership with organisations such as People in Partnership around personal safety, rights and responsibility and safe relationships. Citizens have an opportunity to run and co-facilitate these sessions once they have completed them.

Practical support sessions include Birmingham Rathbone supporting citizens with job searches: how to write a curriculum vitae, support to complete job application forms, mock interviews, practice presentational skills and even be accompanied to job interviews. The organisation also train, coach and mentor citizens, sometimes through peer support of more experienced service users to develop skills, confidence and self-esteem to be able to get and keep a paid or voluntary position.

Those who have participated in internal organisational initiatives or those who do not need to utilise them are then signposted externally for either training or voluntary/paid work. Friendship Care and Housing successfully supported 50 people into voluntary work positions this year.

Most of the citizens require support around finding the courses that they are not only interested in but which are appropriate for their needs and capabilities. Staff provide support to citizens to contact and apply to the different training providers. In terms of work-like activities, organisations work in partnership with organisations such as Birmingham Voluntary Service Organisation, Disability Resources Centre, Jericho and BITA Pathways to identify and match citizens with the right voluntary work options. A flexible approach and matching individuals' personal interests with the volunteering opportunities has been found to be most effective in sustaining the placements. Even once the citizens are in training or

voluntary work the support workers continue to offer encouragement and support and liaise with the placements to minimise the risk of placement breakdown.

As part of the transitions support for young people, **Birmingham City Council** are currently working to provide 50 placements/taster days for young people aged 14-25 with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities between January and March 2016. This continues to build upon the number of placements provided by the local authority for students with Disabilities over the last few years.

(This activity will be covered in a Report to the Education and Vulnerable Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 20th January 2016).

The wider issue of relating to the need for much earlier preparation of children with Special Education Needs/Disabilities into the world of work sit outside of the remit of this report. However contributions to this report from members of the Health and Wellbeing Board point to the broader considerations of support to schools and academies from Birmingham City Council as a large employer and commissioner of works, services and infra -structure developments.

8. Support to maintain employment

Once an individual has found employment, to sustain their employment employers need to understand and recognise the requirements for supporting a person with a learning disability into employment. Employers need to adapt their approaches to look at the support and learning mechanisms they have in place to support individuals to sustain employment. A lack of support or understanding from the employers can result in a failed employment opportunity. Therefore, whether it be training, voluntary or paid work, providers acknowledge that there may be occasional breakdowns and working with the customers as a service provider to understand what worked/did not work in each situation ensures that these occurrences do not result in individuals giving up, but finding a better way to achieve their identified outcomes.

Supporting People commissioned providers have had notable successes with some citizens who have gone through the activities outlined: starting from the internal activities, external training, voluntary work and eventually paid work. The service delivery outcomes identified for housing support services for people with learning disabilities therefore includes access to employment training or volunteering.

The current housing support (Supporting People) commissioned services also includes the potential match funding opportunities from the **European Social Fund (ESF)**. The aim of this funding is to support people the furthest away from the labour market into work opportunities.

The bid submission is being led by the Economy Directorate on behalf of Birmingham and Solihull to progress the first of these ESF opportunities through the Youth Employment Initiative for people aged 15 – 29 NEET). This funding is being made available for regions across Europe with high levels of youth unemployment. If successful the funding will support in the region of 16,000 young people into employment and training opportunities. The delivery model, works on two levels 1) Support to the individual to access and remain

engaged in employment and training activities 2) Support to the employer particularly where specific presenting vulnerabilities may require some focused intensive support input within the workplace. The proposed delivery model includes dedicated intervention workers to support young people with learning disabilities (and young people with mental health conditions).

9. Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility (BBC4SR)

One of the key requirements of the BBC4SR focuses upon local employment. Organisations bidding for contracts with the local authority are specifically required to demonstrate how they will create local employment opportunities, including for those individuals that have disabilities or face challenges.

10. Case studies from Birmingham Rathbone

Rathbone work with clients and their employers to ensure that there is clarity about the role and relationships from the start and that support is available when problems occur. In the past year Rathbone have supported 18 people into paid or voluntary positions, and worked with 13 people and their employers to iron out workplace problems successfully; 21 people started their journey towards employment by accessing formal external training and a further 27 accessed the Rathbone in-house training programme.

For example, Rathbone helped a person with Downs Syndrome to obtain a job at a newly opened large supermarket in Birmingham, however, the individual got into disciplinary problems for breaking company policies. Rathbone worked with the employer and the individual and uncovered this was all about a lack of accessibility to the policies. She was not deliberately breaking the policies or trying to be insubordinate. Working with the employer to reproduce the policies which applied to the employee in an easy read format and explaining them and the reasons behind them in a way the client could understand resolved the problem.

Another person with Asperger's, working in a supermarket in the City was threatened with disciplinary action for not carrying out his tasks properly. His supervisor would tell him to do something but was dissatisfied with his performance. Rathbone worked with the individual and the employer to try to resolve the issue and maintain his employment. The problem was that the individual required literal instructions so telling him to go and clear up a particular room was too vague and resulted in the appearance that instructions were not being followed. However, by telling him specifically to empty any dregs from cups into the sink, empty the bins into a black plastic bag, reposition all the chairs at their respective tables etc. his performance improved and he completed all tasks satisfactorily. Again this was about appropriate communication for the person and clarity, but without our support he probably would have lost his job.

11. Case studies from Trident Reach

Trident Reach in the last four quarters has supported 84 people with learning disabilities into employment and training.

NH was initially referred to the service through social services. During his initial needs assessment it was identified that he was interested in working in the retail sector, however, having never worked before, he struggled with communicating with new people. With the support of his allocated worker NH started attending the gardening group with other customers in the service which is facilitated in conjunction with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) charity once a week. This helped NH to learn to communicate and work with new people, develop positive working relationships with others and learn to follow through any new tasks. NH was also signposted to a life skills course with Midland Mencap which covered subjects such as health and safety, fire safety and keeping himself safe. NH successfully completed the course and is currently waiting to enrol at Fircroft College for some personal and social development courses, learning to 'improve assertiveness and decision making skills, 'understanding human behaviour in situations'. With support NH has been able to get voluntary work at a Scope Charity Shop as well as at PDSA. This is helping him to start gaining the practical skills in his area of interest which is retail. NH would like to eventually find paid work in retail and continues to work with his support worker to build up his skills towards this.

HM was initially referred to the service through the Police. HM's main support needs were to find appropriate accommodation and get into paid work. In terms of getting into work, HM did not understand what she needed to do in order to secure employment. HM was supported to enrol for an internal course around the use of computers. This covered basic subjects such as using email, Word and producing a CV. HM's interest was in getting into care work. Her support worker worked with HM to look at the different ways in which she could search for a job and supported her to write a CV and register with the Government's gateway job site as well as other job sites. HM managed to secure a part-time job with a domiciliary care agency. She was supported by her support worker to deal with DWP around her benefits due to the changes in her circumstances. This included filling in timesheets appropriately for the job centre due to working varying hours. This ensured that HM was paid ESA when she worked under 16 hours and continued to have an income. After 4 months HM lost her job due to redundancies; she was then supported to apply for Jobseekers Allowance and supported at a few meetings with job centre advisors. She was supported to request a disability advisor to support her with her specific needs and difficulties and who helped her to complete her job search evidence booklet each week to present to the Advisor on signing days. A few agencies have invited HM to attend interviews; however she has been unsuccessful on these occasions, although she felt the interview went well. HM has been advised to contact the companies for feedback. HM is being supported to look at tips and techniques for when she is invited to interviews. HM and her Support Worker have been researching questions and answers on a weekly basis which will possibly come up in interviews, this helps to reduce HM's anxieties about interview questions. HM has been supported to enrol into adult education to enable her to improve her functional skills in Math and English. She is currently attending a Level 2 in Creative Computing. HM is attending each week and building on her current knowledge around the internet, search engines, emails and typing letters in word document. HM is enjoying the course and feels that it is only a matter of time before she can get another paid job.

JA was supported by Trident Reach Learning Disabilities Floating Support Service for 11 months and is from North Birmingham. He had a job working for Valour in Birmingham for

25 years working in their warehouse loading and unloading gas and electric fires. Unfortunately JA was made redundant in May 2012 because of the recession. After leaving Valour JA looked after his elderly father until he passed away. JA has a learning disability and a diagnosis of borderline autistic spectrum disorder. Among his support needs were: sorting out benefits, securing his tenancy and dealing with repairs. However JA's priority was wanting assistance to get back into employment as he was finding it very frustrating trying to find a job and getting nowhere with his search. This was because JA described approaching various companies about employment but it appeared he lacked the communication skills to explain what he wanted to say and how to sell himself clearly to employers. In light of JA's difficulties obtaining employment JA's support worker supported him through being aware of difficulties he may face. It appeared JA may have faced discrimination by potential employers because of his learning disability and his poor verbal communication skills. Support and encouragement was provided, looking at his abilities rather than his disability, for example, it was evident JA had wide experience in his previous job of warehouse duties including cleaning and forklift truck driving; the challenge was to recognise these and then provide support to him to get across to training providers or employers what JA was capable of and successfully obtain a job offer.

Initially JA was supported through signposting him to training providers and employment organisations such as Lisieux Trust, a work training programme or the direct employment team who could help him find permanent employment. Support included advocating his needs and assisting with his communication skills when attending appointments or meetings, for example, the support worker assisted JA by arranging with him to be interviewed by a disability employment adviser at Erdington Job Centre. This led to JA being referred to The Work Right programme that could assist him with writing CVs, interview skills and communication skills. Also JA was assisted to obtain a copy of a reference letter from his previous employer that he could use to support job applications.

JA was supported to register with Pertemps and was offered a temporary warehouse position. Over the next 8 months JA worked for Pertemps at several Kuehne and Nagel Warehouses. JA talked about his experiences of getting back into employment, "at the one place I was just standing around labelling wine bottles but at the second place I found it a nicer environment and I got on with people. In January 2014 Pertemps phoned me up and offered me a permanent job at the second Kuehne and Nagel site". This was a really positive breakthrough because JA had demonstrated to Pertemps that he was able to really work hard, was punctual and never complained about the work. Reflecting on this result JA says "I feel great now and I've got a real sense of achievement that I managed to find a permanent job again."

12. Midland MENCAP Volunteering into Employment Programme

Until 2014 Midland Mencap ran the Volunteering into Employment programme using grant funding from both Birmingham City Council and the Department of Works and Pensions. There has been some very useful learning from this programme.

This was a pathway programme aimed at supporting individuals to develop a range of skills that could enhance their prospects of entering the workforce. The similarity of this model to the case studies above included working with employers from many sectors to develop volunteering opportunities for individuals that gave them experience & skills but also helped build a CV. This programme was hugely popular and successful, particularly in developing

long term volunteering placements. Over 200 individuals successfully went through that programme.

A small number, less than 10, gained paid employment but even that number was well above the national average in % terms.

The issue for programmes like this is more complicated than it first looks, however, in brief:

- At the point individuals entered the programme little or no previous investment/preparation in them had been offered to prepare them for the reality of work, paid or otherwise. So the majority of people with a learning disability, as individuals, are as distant from the labour market as it is possible to be.
- Considering all of these individuals have been to school we have to ask ourselves strategically what are schools doing to prepare people with a learning disability for a life of work? The answer is not very much. Education is a major part of changing this for people otherwise why bother going to school?
- The pathway to employment is most likely going to be through volunteering schemes or placement opportunities that give people a point of reference to work towards. Preparation for this can take time and typically on this programme it could take up to two years to support someone to be ready to try a work placement.
- Potential employers need a lot of support too, both in ensuring the correct support is available to both parties to make a success of the opportunity but importantly to ensure the workplace culture is supportive. Every employee has to buy into supporting a learning disability colleague in the workplace.
- The programme we ran had workplace mentoring that was for both worker & employer, it was probably the single most thing that glued people to their jobs.

Mencap have done a lot of work nationally in this area, the question to be answered is why should an organisation employ somebody with a learning disability?

- Best practice employers should recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the wider society.
- By employing people with a learning disability, and receiving support from organisations like Midland Mencap to make any necessary adjustments, businesses and organisations will become more disability confident.
- People with a learning disability can be extremely efficient employees and are competent in a range of quite complex procedures.
- People with a learning disability provide untapped talent suitable for hard-to-fill vacancies.

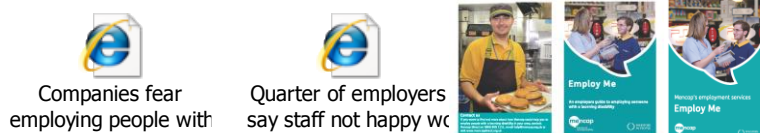
- Disability confident employers save the time and costs of having to rehire new staff in areas where they employ people with learning disabilities as people tend to stay in roles three times longer and take fewer sick days.

Considerations

Policy findings from the Valuing People Now (2010) reports make reference to the following recommendations;

- * raising the expectations of people with disabilities, their families and professionals
- * improving the transition from education to employment
- * the inclusion in work of people with severe and/or complex learning disabilities
- * quality standards for supported employment
- * a framework for workforce qualifications

The link documents below provide further information.



Kalvinder Kohli - Head of Service - prevention and Complex,
Commissioning Centre of Excellence
People Directorate

Appendix A: Citizen Pathway



Contributions to this report have been received from:

Commissioning Centre of Excellence, People Directorate

Place Directorate

Economy Directorate

Trident Reach

Birmingham Rathbone

Midland MENCAP

Friendship Care and Housing

Health and Wellbeing Board